Paperskins: Remnants and Traces

Second in a series of paper works by Kay Stanfield

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"The how of colours and images is intended to provoke a meditation...on the magic of the visual and the magic of art." Susan Hiller, 1999 [1]

The starting point for Kay Stanfield in her Paperskins series is the collection of artless, worthless artifacts and materials: rubbish, discards, fragments and trivia that the artist recontextualizes and transforms by deliberate art processes.

By using the paper making process, Stanfield reduces her raw materials to pulp and continues with the laborious process of layering the pulped materials. Intrigued by the natural forces at work in the process of setting up and letting happen what natural forces dictate, Stanfield attempts intervention upon and collaboration with the forces of nature that are beyond her control. By reducing the textiles to individual filaments and 'reconstituting' them into layers or skins and combining these with specifically selected found objects, Stanfield is fragmenting objects from her immediate world and turning those fragments into a whole, the layering combined with the indifference of natural forces - the random shrinking, cracking and splitting - reflecting the concept of time and aging.

As previously cited [2], it is Stanfield's willingness to work with the unforeseeable consequences of the physical that is of particular interest, the collaboration with the unpredictable in a willful and conscious creation of work which evokes the wonder of what can not be anticipated. These transmuted raw materials and found objects, which hint at retaining their own history, are shaped by concepts of geological and human time--- ostensibly a visual search for the balance of our human need for order and nature's inherent ordering principles.

For the standing forms in the earlier exhibition *Paperskins, Standing Forms and Wall Reliefs* [3], pulp was both applied by hand and sprayed over a framework (removed after drying was complete) wrapping the form in a cocoon of variegated material, the inherent colours of which reflect the colours of the original materials used. Allowing each layer to dry before the next layer was applied, the cotton and linen materials drying and shrinking at different rates and to different degrees (standing forms starting out on a seven foot framework can shrink as much as two feet), Stanfield carefully constructed the standing forms acquiescing to the vicissitudes of nature. For the wall reliefs, the pulp was poured and/or sprayed over found objects which became ominously embedded in the finished piece. Embalmed in the first few layers, zippers, buttons, grommets, the materials that do not transform in the paper making process, provided clues to the material's former life and cues to Stanfield's intent. While this most recent work in *Paperskins: Remnants and Traces* is constructed following the same principles as the earlier work, Stanfield has added a layer of vivid and sumptuous colour, both metallic and nonmetallic. And in several of the pieces she has further compounded her intention by tearing apart earlier works, assiduously sewing them together again, and applying layers of pigment. It is a process of both making and unmaking - a complex transformation and an intervention appropriate to Stanfield's own love of colour and satisfaction in manipulating her materials. (She applies the pigment directly to the forms

with her hands.)

One of the obvious inclusions in this new work is the ochre pigment. Stanfield first became intrigued with raw ochre on a visit several years ago to Kootenay National Park in British Columbia. Raw and organic, the ochre pigment [4], a purchased French ochre, intensifies the rags and earth concept of Stanfield's current work. Applied to the large vessel forms it is suggestive of the body paint used by early Native Americans as a shield against evil and protection against cold in winter and insects in summer [5] referencing the timeless human form, enhancing the premise of aging, and proposing remnants of life.

Like Susan Hiller, Stanfield reveals aspects of our shared experience which, although charged with significance, are often concealed [6]. And, like the alchemist theoretically possessed of magic power for changing one thing into another, Stanfield continues to exercise a control over her materials. So, while working in a medium given to unpredictability, Stanfield is officiating in random acts that bestow presence and a certain permanence and significance to the quotidian. It is a process, for Stanfield, of fixing a moment in time.

Susan MacAlpine Foshay, April 2003

[1] Susan Hiller, American-born British multi-media installation artist, statement, *PSI Girls*, 1999.
[2] Susan MacAlpine Foshay, **Paperskins: Standing Forms and Wall Reliefs**, FAQ Consulting, Halifax, 2001.
[3] *Paperskins: Standing Forms and Wall Reliefs*, Alderney Landing Art Gallery, Dartmouth, September 2001.
[4] Ochre - iron oxide - was the first colour paint. Victoria Finlay, **Colour: Travels Through the Paintbox**, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2002, p. 26.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Susan Hiller, Ibid.

Kay Stanfield graduated from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (BFA) in 1987 and has since continued her studies, specifically in paper making, at various institutions in the United States, and has had a number of solo exhibitions and participated in a number of two-person and group exhibitions within the region. Stanfield was one of the artists represented in the invitational 7th International Shoebox Sculpture Exhibition organized by the University of Hawaii Art Gallery and travelling throughout the United States and Taiwan until the end of 2002. A tireless volunteer and teacher, Stanfield has devoted a great deal of effort to the visual arts and education. Her work is widely collected privately and is also in a number of public collections in Nova Scotia.

The artist would like to thank the many contributors of linen and cotton materials for this project with special thanks to Gordie Stanfield and Bill Marshall for providing engineering and carpentry services.

Susan MacAlpine Foshay graduated from the University of Pennsylvania (MA) in 1983 and has since worked extensively in the visual arts in Nova Scotia; as Exhibitions Curator at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (1987-97) and as an independent curator, art consultant and gallery owner (1997 - present). YHZ Halifax Contemporary Art Gallery opened in the fall of 2000 and xportfolio, a web-based gallery, debuted in 1999, each representing Nova Scotia artists exclusively. Foshay has served on boards and committees of several Nova Scotia arts organizations and institutions and is the recipient of the 2003 Atlantic Craft Award of Excellence for Industry Leader/Supporter granted annually by the governments of the four Atlantic Provinces.

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List of Works

Measurements are in centimetres, height preceding width preceding depth.

ochre form 1, 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 47 x 43.5 x 45 cm

ochre form 2, 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 67 x 44 x 30 cm

ochre form 3, 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 86 x 41 x 41 cm

ochre form 4, 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 77 x 37 x 35 cm

ochre form 5, 2003
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 79 x 33 x 38 cm

ochre form 6, 2003
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment , 86 x 39 x 38 cm

ochre form 7, 2003
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment,100 x 40 x 36 cm

paperskin: rust, 2001
mixed fibres, found object, oil stick, pigment, 65 x 65 cm

paperskin: manhole, 2001
embossed cotton rag, linen rag, oil stick pigment, 47 x 43 cm

paperskin: disc, 2001
cotton, linen fibres, disc, oil stick, pigment, 47 x 49 cm

paperskin: pieced, 2001
fibres, thread oil stick, pigments, 73 x 62 cm

paperskin: linen pockets (diptych), 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick pigments,
left: 109 x 78 cm right: 111 x 82 cm

paperskin: wire fencing, 2002
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 81 x 109 cm

paperskin: remains, 2002
fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigments, 66 x 78 cm

paperskin: bees and jeans, 2002
fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigments, 62 x 60 cm

ochre: buttons, 2003
mixed fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigment, 61 x 62 cm

ochre: tire tracks, 2003
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigment, 53 x 53 cm

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ochre: wrinkle, 2003
mixed fibres, oil stick pigment, 46 x 45 cm

paperskin: blue wave (diptych), 2003
mixed fibres, found materials, oil stick, pigment
left: 106 x 81 cm right:103 x 75 cm

paperskin: ripple (triptych), 2003
mixed fibres, found materials, watercolour
left: 57.5 x 62.5 cm middle: 56.5 x 57.5 cm right:58 x 58 cm

paperskin: ultramarine (triptych), 2003
mixed fibres, found materials, oil stick, pigments
left: 45 x 42.5 cm middle: 45.5 x 44.5 cm right: 44 x 43 cm

paperskin: echo (triptych), 2003
mixed fibres, found materials, oil stick, pigments
left: 45 x 45 cm middle: 45 x 45 cm right: 45 x 45 cm

paperskin: Arnie's bees, 2003
fibres, found objects, oil stick, pigments, 70 x 69 cm

paperskin: pieced 2, 2003
fibres, thread, oil stick, pigments, 72 x 60 cm

paperskin 3, 2002
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 51 x 51 cm

paperskin 4, 2002
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 47 x 47 cm

paperskin 5, 2002
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 47 x 47 cm

paperskin 6, 2002
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 43 x 44 cm

paperskin 7, 2003
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 51 x 48 cm

paperskin 8, 2003
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 48 x 46 cm

paperskin 9, 2003
mixed fibres, oil stick, pigments, 47 x 36 cm

Images
Upper cover: paperskin: pieced (detail), 2001
Lower cover: paperskin: linen pockets (detail), 2002
ochre form 2, 2002
paperskin: bees and jeans, 2002
paperskin: linen pockets (diptych), 2002

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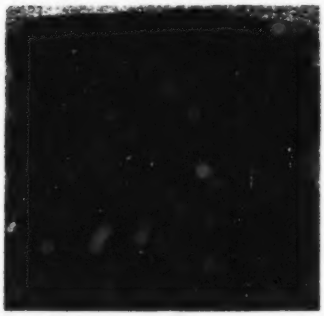

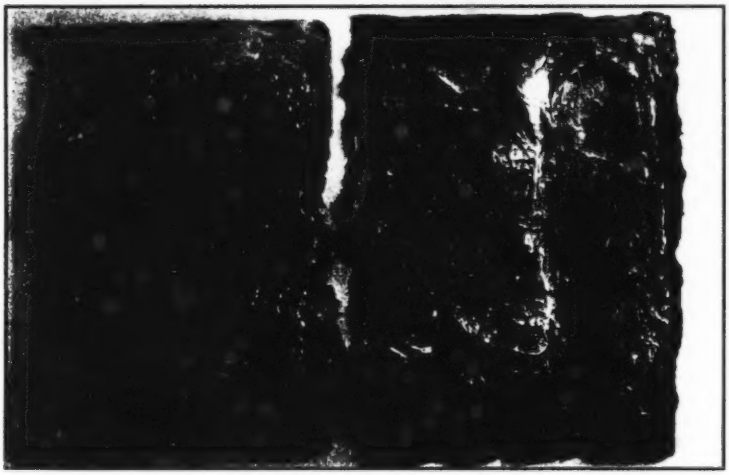

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